

The Quality Enhancement Project

UPDATE

February 2015



Quality assurance to Quality enhancement

Quality Assurance:

“the means through which an institution ensures and confirms that the conditions are in place for students to achieve the standards set by it or by another awarding body” (UK QAA),

Quality Enhancement:

“has defined enhancement as **taking deliberate steps to bring about improvement in the effectiveness of the learning experiences of students.**” (Scottish QAA)

Focus of the Quality Enhancement Project

The enhancement of student learning with a view to producing an increased number of graduates with attributes that are personally, professionally and socially valuable.

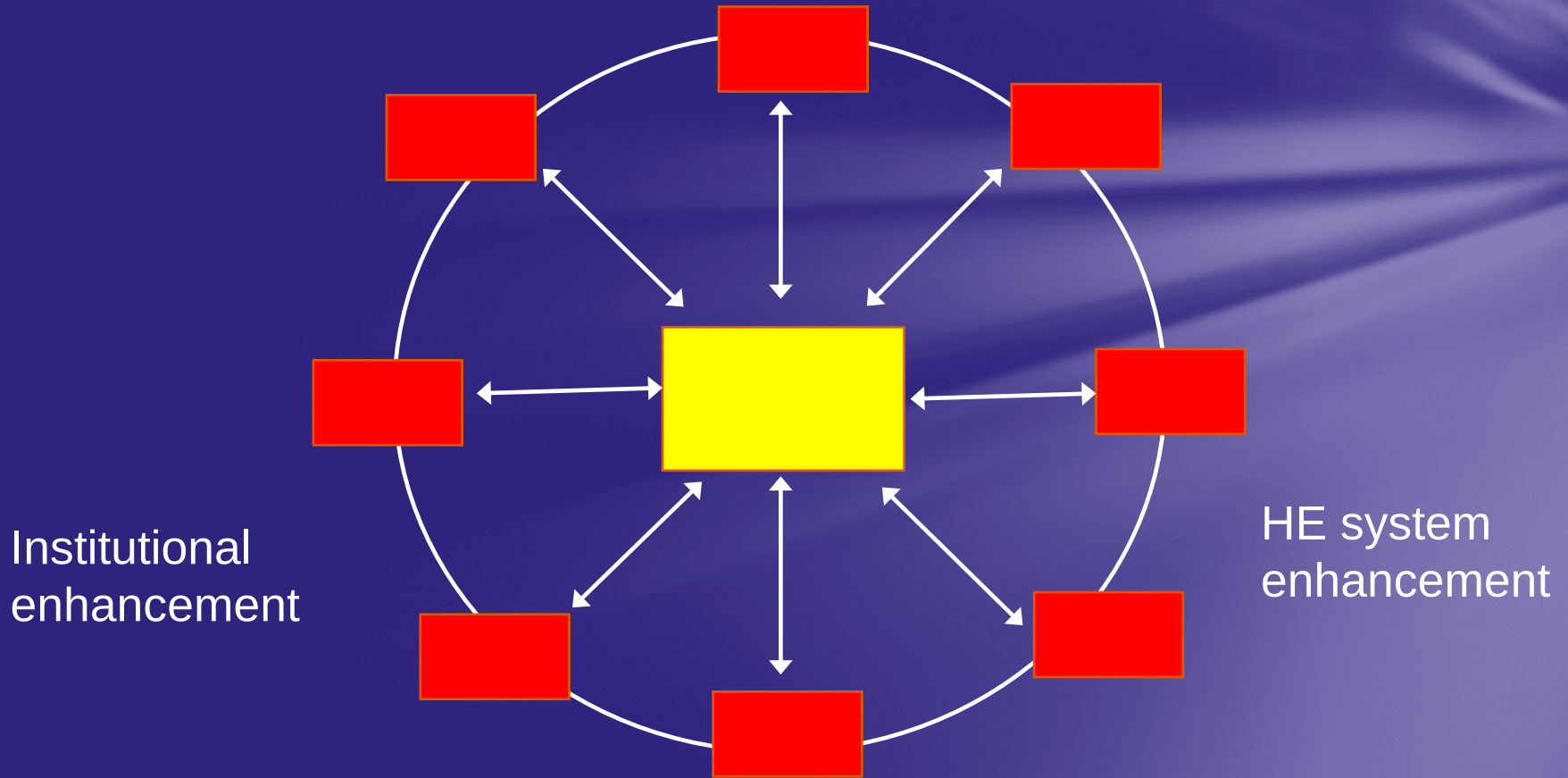
1. enhanced student learning, leading to an
2. increased number of graduates that have
3. improved graduate attributes

STUDENT SUCCESS

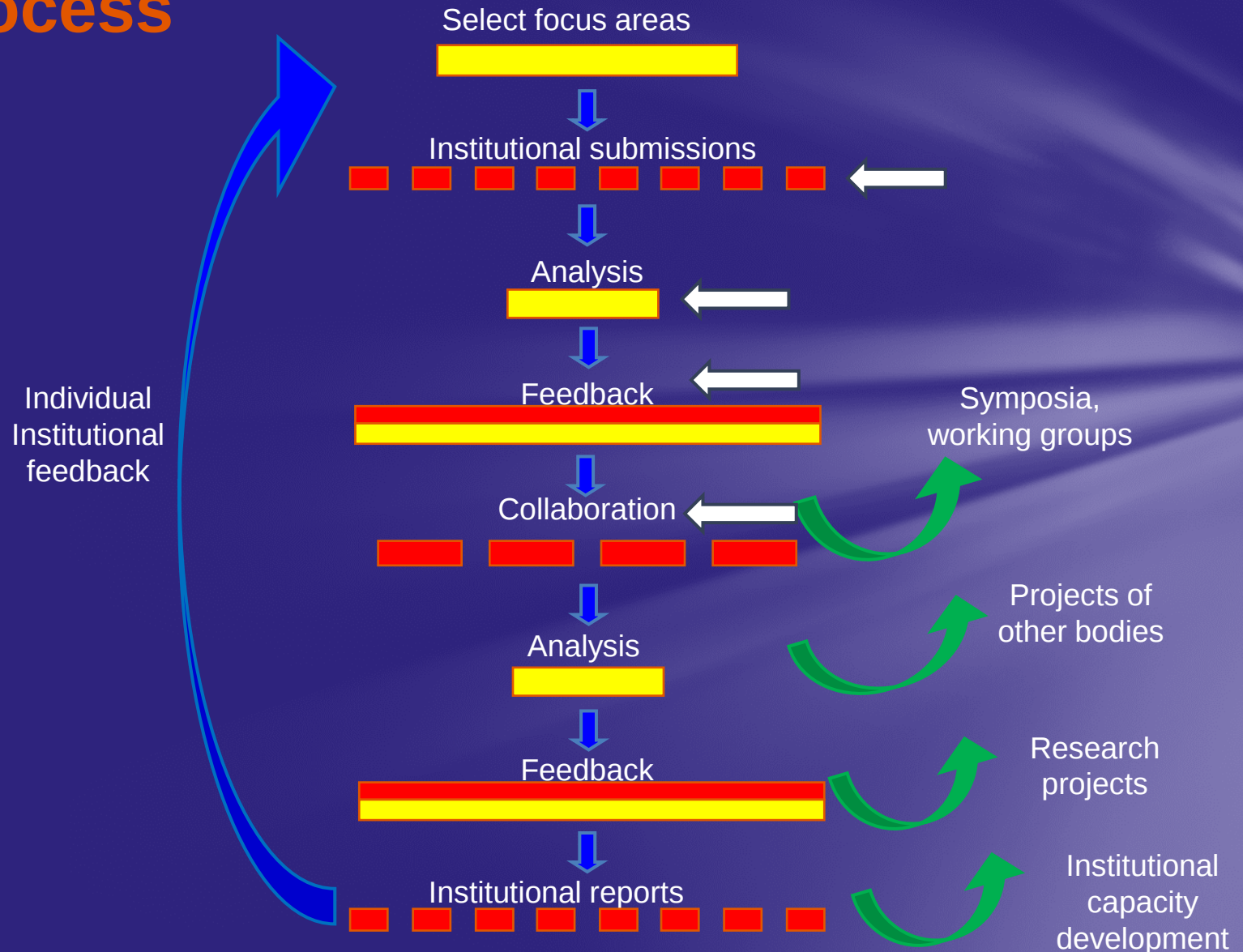
Approach

- Institutions engaged simultaneously
- Four focus areas identified to start with for first two years
- Both individual institutions and collaborative groups of institutions will be involved
- Inductive and iterative (two phases)

Both institutionally-based and nationally coordinated activities



Process



Collective engagement

Analysis
of institutional
submissions

DVC
Forum

Published
reports

QEP
meetings

Research

Working
groups

Symposia,
workshops
and
conferences

Monitoring and accountability

The Institutional Audits Committee monitors the QEP and is accountable to the HEQC

A working group has been formed to develop indicators for the QEP, with support from SAAIR

Focus areas for Phase 1

1. Enhancing academic as teachers

Including professional development, reward and recognition, workload, conditions of service and performance appraisal.

2. Enhancing student support and development

Including career and curriculum advising, life and academic skills development, counselling, student performance monitoring and referral.

3. Enhancing the learning environment

Including teaching and learning spaces, ICT infrastructure and access, technology-enabled tools and resources, library facilities.

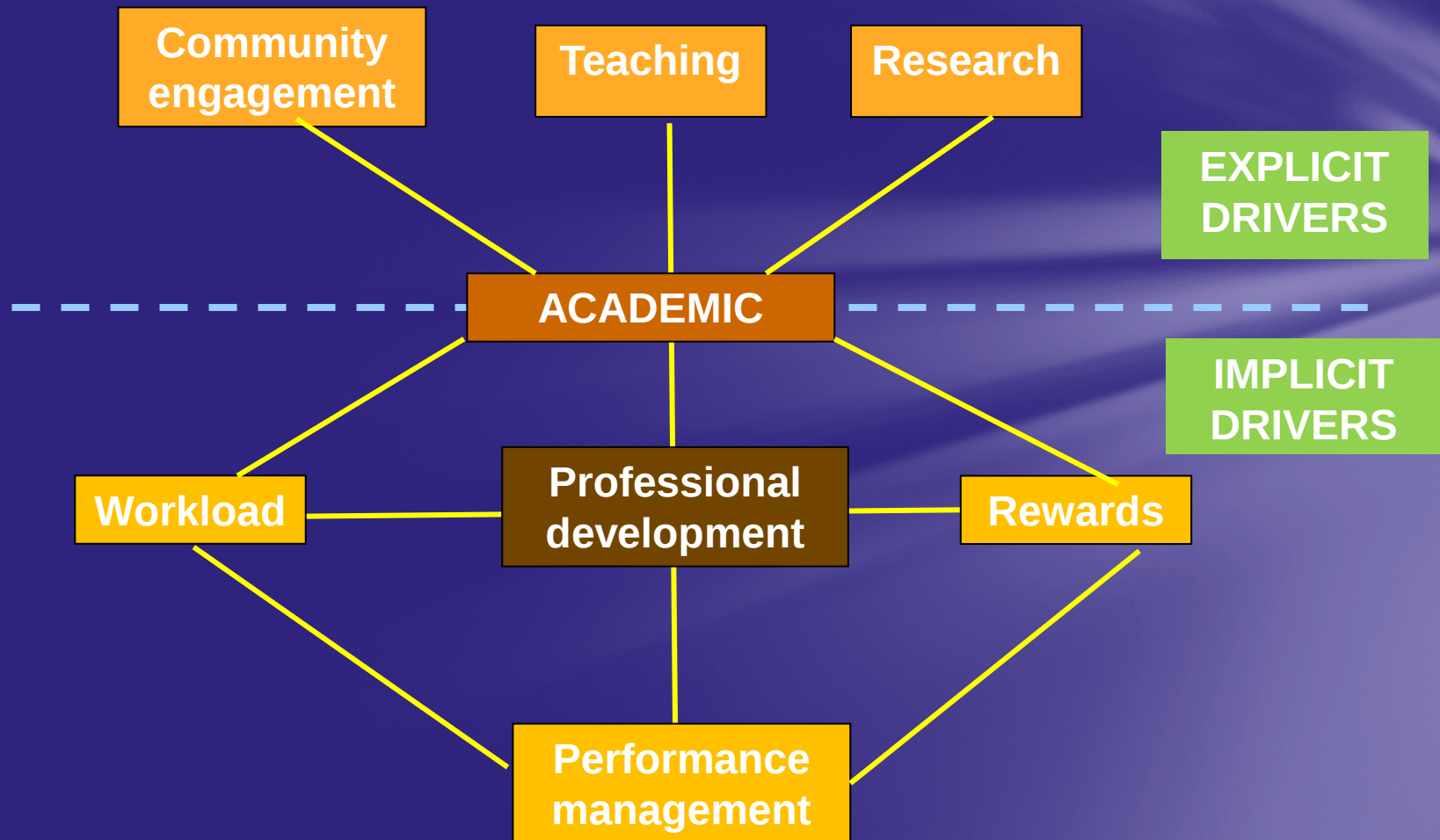
4. Enhancing course and programme enrolment management

Including admissions, selection, placement, readmission refusal, pass rates in gateway courses, throughput rates, management information systems.

FA1: Enhancing academics as teachers

- Growing awareness of the need for training as a teacher in HE, value of SOTL
- Some formal programmes offered
- Extent to which teaching is considered in promotion varies (related to performance management)
- Requirements and opportunities for professional development vary
- Need to make provision for professional development for temporary staff
- Need for workload models
- Division for T&L with specialist staff important

Structural elements that influence how academics allocate their time, energy and attention



FA1: Enhancing student support and development

- Wide variety of formal structures, coordination not always good
- Some tracking and referral of students at risk done, but not universal
- IT systems don't always make monitoring of students' performance easy (poor integration, support, training)
- Support activities often voluntary, not timetabled so less uptake than is desirable
- Academic support: helps with tasks related to academic courses
- Non-academic support: helps with the rest of life

- Different models of academic literacy- voluntary, compulsory, stand-alone, integrated in courses
- Writing centres quite common
- Tutoring and/or Supplemental Instruction quite common
- Mentoring and peer support available in some institutions
- Life skills, advising and counselling done in different ways by different people.
- Need for clinical psychologists growing.

- Availability of career guidance and counselling limited
- Development of workplace-related skills variable
- Some institutions have strong links with employers, others less so

FA3: Enhancing the learning environment

- Conflict between large lecture room and spaces that enable interactive teaching and learning
- At many institutions student numbers exceed carrying capacity
- Some state of the art specialised teaching spaces that link with industry, professions or community
- General shortage of student learning spaces
- Some innovative uses of spaces for learning
- Most institutions have learning management systems (LMS) but not all are used effectively

- Computer facilities on campuses vary hugely
- Moves to increase wi-fi but bandwidth, cost constraints
- More wi-fi enables students to use own devices
- Some institutions have apps to enable students to access LMS and student portal
- Limited teaching with technology other than LMS
- ICT capacity very variable (machine and human)

- Libraries playing more and more important role
- Physical spaces for learning and accessing information, using computers
- Librarians help with knowledge management for institution and training for staff and students
- Librarians' role getting more complex and demanding, so sometimes hard to find right people

FA4: Enhancing course and programme enrolment management

- Selection and placement methods vary, challenging
- Admissions tricky because of timing of matric results release, students applying to more than one institution and programme
- This complicates enrolment planning
- Some institutions have elaborate enrolment planning, real-time monitoring of registrations
- “Walk-ins” a problem at some institutions

- Re-admission refusals and exclusions handled differently, timing, following rules
- Managing enrolment of continuing students challenging– some drop out or stop out
- Monitoring of performance in gateway courses and associated actions variable. More needed generally.
- Good Management Information Systems (MIS) critical
- Need in-house IT capacity as well as a good product that is upgraded regularly
- MIS needs to integrate with LMS and other systems to monitor students and cohorts

Evidence- three categories

Type A- noticing, counting, observing

Purpose is to ensure planning is implemented

Type B- surveying, evaluating, collecting feedback

Purpose is to understand, become informed

Type C- monitoring, investigating, benchmarking

Purpose is to provide ongoing or deeper understanding

FA1- mostly type A, FA2- mixed,

FA3- mostly type B (but small number),

FA4- almost all type C (but small number)

Planned activities for 2015

March- QEP institutional workshops for 4 reps/ public HEI

April- Analysis doc of institutional submissions published, DVCs meeting

May- two workshops for private HEIs

June- workshop for public HEIs directors for T&L and deputy deans T&L on assessing pedagogical competence

July- report on QEP institutional workshops published

Aug-Oct – QEP workshops for private HEIs, QEP Inkundla for public HEIs, DVCs trip to Scotland

November- institutional reports for public HEIs due (30th)

Phase 1 main activities (2014-2016)

2014

QEP launch (27 Feb)
QEP student workshop
Institutional QE committee identified
Institutional submissions
Analysis
QEP meeting, DVCs meeting (public)
Focus area workshop, WG meetings (private)

2015

Collaborative group workshops
Analysis
QEP meetings, DVC meeting (public)
Institutional reports
Focus area workshops, WG meetings (private)
Select new focus areas

2016

Feedback to each institution (public)
Institutional submissions
Analysis
QEP meetings, DVCs meeting (public)
WG meetings (private)

Expected outcomes of the QEP

- Benchmarks and codes of good practice for quality undergraduate provision
- Policy recommendations
- Tools and resources for improving student success
- Research
- Communities of practice



Raise the bar for what can be expected of institutions in promoting student success in future

Broad desired outcomes

1. Enhancement of the quality of undergraduate provision
2. Enhancement of the quality of graduates
3. A higher education system that is improving continuously as members of the higher education community collaborate to share good practice and solve shared problems.

“Student success does not arise by chance. Nor does substantial improvement in institutional rates of student retention and graduation. It is the result of intentional, structured and proactive actions and policies directed towards the success of all students.”

(Vincent Tinto 2012)